



Aquarium Creatures Past and Present

Archives

This month we feature the Chain dogfish

Chain dogfish

Scyliorhinus retifer



Also known as the chain catshark, the chain dogfish is a member of the cat shark family and is a cartilaginous fish. They are pale brown or sometimes yellowish with a chain link pattern on it's back which acts as camouflage.

Their eyesight is very poor - food is found primarily by smell.

Size: Up to 18 in. (46 cm)

Range: North East Coast and Georges Bank to Florida, the Gulf of Mexico and Nicaragua

Habitat: Rocky bottoms, at depths of 510 -2000 ft. (155 -545 m)

Feeding Habits: Feeds on shrimp, worms and small fish and crustaceans.

FUN FACTS:

The hide of some species is valued as leather and is also used as an abrasive "sand paper" called shagreen

Females can store viable sperm for up to 16 months

Eggs laid in horny cases have tendrils that wrap around debris or sessile invertebrates on bottom

The chain dogfish embryos take up to 9 months to develop



You can see chain dogfish and their egg cases here at the Woods Hole Science Aquarium. (Oct 4, 2005) Look in display tank #14, tanks RD1, RD2 or L1. Don't know the names of the tanks? Just ask a staff person!

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